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INFORMATION REPORT INFORMATION REPORT

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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COUNTRY East Germany

REPORT

SUBJECT Description of Soviet Amphibious Tank

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SOURCE EVALUATIONS ARE DEFINITIVE APPRAISAL OF CONTENT IS TENTATIVE

report on Soviet military activities observed in the Heegsee area during the period of 1-12 August. The substance of the report is concerned with a detailed description of a tracked amphibious vehicle.

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EASTERN GERMANYMilitaryActivity in the HEEGESEE Area
1 - 12 August, 1956

1. During the period 1 - 12 August, 1956, there was very little activity in the HEEGESEE Area. In the main, troops could be seen cleaning and maintaining tracked amphibians. On a few occasions single amphibians were seen to make short trips on the lake.

2. [redacted] one of the tracked amphibians seen during the period. The vehicle was 6.5 metres in length, 2.8 metres in width and the height of the body-work was 1.5 metres. The body was shaped like a rectangular box and was constructed of steel plate, approx. 3 mm. thick and reinforced with beading. The thickness of the metal used for the hull of the vehicle could not be estimated. [redacted]

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3. The suspension of the vehicle consisted of 7 bogie-wheels (approx. 40 cms. in diameter) and 7 return rollers. The width of the tracks was 25 cms.

4. On the bows of the vehicle there was a hatch measuring 70 x 80 cms giving access to the engine. On the hatch cover there was a cork life-belt.

5. The windscreen was approx. 1.80 metres in width. At the right hand end of the windscreen there was a whip aerial approx. 1.5 metres in height.

6. The driving controls consisted of 2 control sticks for operating the tracks and a steering wheel. The grip for the steering wheel consisted of two segments.

7. The stern of the tracked amphibian sloped slightly inwards from top to bottom. There was one driving screw with a double-bladed propeller. Between the stern and the wing-screw there was a clearance of approx. 10 cms. and the shaft was loosely enclosed in a bellowed rubber cover.

8. The lighting on the tracked amphibian consisted of the following:-

- (a) 2 searchlights with a diameter of 15 cms. The faces of these searchlights were covered with a sheet of metal with an oblong slit 10 cms. long and 2 cms. deep. The glass of the searchlight was fluted and concave. The light was white. There was a wire guard in front of each searchlight.
- (b) 2 navigation lights with a diameter of 5 cms. The glass was arched and plain. Each lamp had a red bulb. A wire guard was positioned in front of each light.

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8. (c) In the middle of the windscreen a boss-shaped lamp was fitted. The diameter of this lamp was approx. 12 cms. The glass was concave and red. The lamp was slightly tilted forward and gave a light red or magenta light.
- (d) The rear-lighting of the vehicle consisted of an oblong shaped box with 3 reflectors in a row. From left to right these reflectors were coloured, red, yellow and blue.

NOTE: One tracked amphibian seen had different shaped searchlights in the place of (a) above. Instead of having a metal cover with a slit, these searchlights, which had a diameter of 15 cms., were fitted with a protruding hood. The glass was fluted and concave and gave a red or magenta light.

9. On the 21st July, 1956, 3 large petrol tanks were unloaded at the railway siding which leads into the petrol depot at KUMMERSDORF/GUT. These tanks were 15 metres long and had a diameter of approx. 3 metres. The tanks gave one the impression that they had been taken out of the ground recently. The bill of lading showed that the tanks had been loaded at COTTBUS.

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